

This is a monthly diary giving updates on activities at Graceful Living and providing information on ageing 'gracefully' to help elders live a life with maximum ease



GRACEFUL LIVING

LOVE LIFE LIBERTY

POPPING ACIDITY PILLS? THE QUICK FIX MAY HAVE A HIDDEN COST

Durgesh Nandan Jha speaks to Dr Ashwini Kumar Setya, senior gastroenterologist at Medanta Hospital, to assess the risks. We have used this article verbatim from *The Times of India*, August 2025. This is Important information as both, the young and old alike, are suffering from acidity big time

Ranitidine, a once-trusted over-the-counter anti-acidity pill taken by millions, is under scrutiny after fears that it may contain a probable cancer-causing contaminant. The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has asked states to direct manufacturers to monitor NDMA levels in the drug.

Why has this pill become so controversial?

Ranitidine belongs to a class of drugs called histamine-2 (H-2) blockers, which reduce but don't completely stop stomach acid production. Ranitidine is not carcinogenic on its own. The concern arises when the molecule breaks down over time or under certain conditions to form N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), a nitrosamine linked to possible cancer risk. Since it's cheap and easily available, contamination could impact many.

Sold under brand names like Zantac and Rantac, should we stop using Ranitidine? Should long-term users be concerned?

We are yet to come across medicines, including vitamins, which don't have side effects. No drug should be taken without medical supervision. Reports say the concentration of contaminants in Ranitidine is very small. But prolonged consumption and cumulative exposure could exceed safe limits.

The Drugs Technical Advisory Board has suggested that drug makers reduce Ranitidine's shelf life to lower NDMA levels. Will that help?

Ranitidine can degrade over time, especially when exposed to heat, humidity, and light, producing increased NDMA levels and potentially raising cancer risk. Reducing shelf life shortens the window in which NDMA can pile up, helping to keep it within safe limits.

In 2020, the US FDA had raised similar concerns and ordered its withdrawal. Why is India still allowing manufacture and sale?

CDSCO and the Drugs Controller General of India have been monitoring Ranitidine after the FDA and European Medicines Agency raised a red flag. An expert committee identified cancer risks, but there aren't any documented cases of cancer attributed to the drug in India.

Pantoprazole (brand name Pan D) is another common anti-acidity pill. Any risks of misuse?

Stomach acid serves three purposes — killing ingested germs, starting protein digestion, and activating pepsin for further protein breakdown. Drugs like Pantoprazole reduce stomach acid to nil, removing the first line of defence and raising chances of infections such as

Hepatitis A and E, gastroenteritis, and typhoid. These drugs can also lead to bloating as the undigested food ferments in the gut, producing more gas.

Which one is the safest acidity drug? And when to see a doctor instead of self-medicating?

Short-term use of Ranitidine (up to two months) is not a likely cause for concern. But if considering long-term, talk to the doctor about switching to another H-2 blocker like Famotidine or a proton pump inhibitor (PPI) like Omeprazole. If you're using it just to relieve burning in the chest or upper abdomen, replace with a liquid antacid.

Heartburn, acidity are now common due to sedentary lifestyle and poor diet. Any long-term effects of anti-acidity pills such as rebound acidity, peptic ulcers or even cancer?

Since acid secretion becomes nil with Pantoprazole and other PPIs, the body responds by increasing the hormone gastrin, which makes glands that secrete acid proliferate. When you stop using the drug, those glands start secreting acid with a vengeance, causing rebound acidity. It's a vicious cycle that makes patients want to go back to the drug. One long-term effect of these pills is non-cancerous stomach polyps.



LIFESTYLE TIPS FOR ACIDITY RELIEF

- Eat a balanced diet at regular meal times
- Avoid ultra-processed foods that are high in salt and preservatives
- Avoid fizzy drinks, alcohol, and smoking
- Exercise regularly and get seven hours of sleep
- Try yoga poses like vajrasana to curb reflux



DON'T STOP LEARNING. LET THE 'MINDSET' NOT HINDER PROGRESS



Ms. Amruta Lovekar

Project Coordinator,
Graceful Living

Do you stop learning as you age? No, say several doctors. It is the mindset which prevents further learning

I cannot learn how to use GPay or how to book an Ola or Uber. It's too difficult." We see quite a lot of seniors who express this sentiment and never attempt to learn new things. There are other seniors who are adept at technology and use it actively. What differentiates both? Why do some seniors learn and master things and some struggle or don't even try? Commonly people think that it is the increasing age which results in whether a person is able to learn or not. But it is not the age. It is the mindset.

According to Carol Dweck, author of 'Mindset: The New Psychology of Success', the mindset is a set of beliefs that shape how people interpret the world and their own abilities, influencing their thoughts, feelings and behaviours. She identifies two core types: the fixed mindset where people believe that intelligence and talent are unchangeable and the other is the growth mindset which believes that these qualities can be developed through effort, learning and perseverance.

New research shows that a growth mindset is essential to greater cognitive improvement as people age.



Researchers have found that older adults with higher growth mindsets showed greater cognitive gains than those who had lower growth mindsets. There are more advantages to a growth mindset as suggested by research. What are they? Older adults who endorse a growth mindset are more likely to engage in preventative health behaviours, such as diet, sleep and exercising. They will make active efforts to take care of their health which those with fixed mindsets will not do.

Secondly, a fixed mindset in older adults leads to worse cognitive performance. Training our brain to seek new and different learning experiences is essential

to slow cognitive decline of ageing and to potentially stave off Alzheimer's disease.

Thirdly, a growth mindset can lessen the negative impact of ageism. Negative beliefs about old age affect older adults' psychological and physical health. Studies show that when confronted with age-related stereotypes, older adults with a fixed mindset exhibited physical symptoms like high blood pressure.

On the other hand, those with a growth mindset did not show these physical symptoms when confronted with the same stereotypes.

Thus, a growth mindset is a belief that one can improve and learn and is a perspective that motivates people to grow and engage in new and mentally stimulating activities. This mindset is supported by scientific evidence that the brain has the potential to grow and learn at all stages of life, including old age. Keeping an active and positive growth mindset is instrumental in protecting against the cognitive decline of ageing and it is something that we need to nurture throughout our lifetime. As a quote rightly says: 'Youth is the gift of nature but age is a work of art'.

'AGEING IS NOT A DECLINE, BUT A VIBRANCY OF LIFE'



Dr. Hideki Wada
Japanese psychiatrist

The book, 80-Year-Old Wall by Dr. Wada, provides practical advice on mental and physical well-being for seniors

A best-seller, *80-Year-Old Wall* is written by Japanese psychiatrist Dr. Hideki Wada, 61, who has extensive experience in mental health for the elderly. It offers simple principles for living a joyful and independent life beyond the age of 80. It reframes ageing as an opportunity to live vibrantly, providing practical advice on mental and physical well-being for seniors.

Published in March 2025, the book sold over 500,000 copies in Japan and was on track to become the year's best-seller, highlighting its popularity and resonance in a country with a high life expectancy. If it continues at this rate, sales of this book will exceed 1 million copies, making it the best-selling book in Japan this year.



Key Highlights

The book encourages readers to view ageing as a new chapter of life with the potential for joy and fulfillment, rather than a period of fear.

It provides 44 simple, actionable tips to help individuals navigate their 60s and 80s with courage and curiosity. Examples of the book's principles:

- Stay physically active: Keep walking, exercise to prevent stiffness, and take deep breaths to manage irritation.
- Embrace mental stimulation: Memory loss is often due to a disused brain, so stay curious and engaged.
- Live authentically: Don't be afraid to eat what you want, and understand that being alone doesn't have to mean loneliness.
- Be flexible: Let go of rigid opinions and accept things calmly to find peace.

**STOP LEARNING AND YOU
WILL GET OLD!**

GERIATRIC CARE IN INDIA: A LONG WAY TO GO

We present excerpts from the above article by Jaya Prasad Tripathy (Ref. NIH - National Library of Medicine)

The ever-increasing elderly population poses social and financial challenges and puts immense strain on the health system due to a marked shift toward chronic non-communicable diseases. Besides, social factors like fewer children in each family, increased employment opportunities for women, who were traditionally taking care of the old in India, rapid urbanization and rise of nuclear families call for more focus on geriatric issues, both medical and socio-economic. The elderly in India are a heterogeneous population with variations in morbidity across several variables like gender, location and socioeconomic status, as well as wide diversity in culture and religion. At least 65% of India's old live in rural areas and are illiterate and economically dependent...

In India, the elderly suffer from the dual burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases besides impairment of special sensory functions like vision and hearing and other degenerative diseases. Poor geographical access and high cost of treatment also lead to poor utilization of health care

especially among the elderly who are also prone to abuse in their families or in institutional settings.

Geriatric care is conspicuously missing from the medical education curriculum. Similarly, the nursing and other paramedical staff members are not formally trained in providing care for elderly patients. There is no specialized training in geriatrics in most medical schools in India. Geriatrics is a low-profile specialty that lacks visibility in academia and finds least favour among the medical students. Only selected facilities have a dedicated geriatric unit, but concentrated in urban areas and highly expensive. Very few hospitals provide inpatient geriatric care. Although, there are hundreds of old-age homes, day-care centers and mobile medicare units that provide care to the elderly population, these facilities are managed by NGOs or funded partially by government, but are urban-based, expensive or focused on tertiary as opposed to primary care.

The National Policy on Senior Citizens in 2011 recognizes senior citizens as a

valuable resource for the country and ensures their full participation in society. It aims at providing socio-economic support through income-generating activities, insurance and pension schemes, and promoting care of senior citizens within the family...

While we depend on the domiciliary model of elderly care, we lack scientific models of care in different settings. We should look for cost-effective feasible models of geriatric care that is acceptable and based on our cultural practices and traditions. We should also build new models for long-term medical care. Apart from medical care models, we should explore innovative models of economic support and insurance.

Laws and policies cannot teach us family values and respect for elders. Thus, parents have a major role to play toward fostering respect for elders at a tender age. The government should focus on raising the capacity of health professionals in geriatric care through specialized courses and training and develop socio-economic support mechanisms for the elderly in the community.

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF GRACEFUL LIVING

- On 4th August, Monday - At Dignity Foundation Chai Masti Centre, Vashi. A Counselling Session on Mental Health Issues of Elderly was conducted by Ms. Richika Gupta (Omni Healthservices). The session was interactive, with participants actively sharing their experiences and responding well to the speaker's guidance. Attendance: 15
- On 7th August, Thursday - A Music Therapy Session. This was held at Bhandup Dreams Jyeshtha Nagrik Mandal. The session was interactive, filled with enthusiasm, and much appreciated by the attendees for its therapeutic and joyful impact. Attendance: 60
- On 12th August, Tuesday - A Music Therapy Session was organized at Sahabhav (Unit 3). Seniors enjoyed engaging with music-based activities, which fostered emotional well-being and relaxation. Attendance: 15
- On 14th August, Thursday - As suggested by partner physiotherapist, Dr. Pooja Gindra, Graceful Living interacted with 20 health workers of Centre for Study of Social Change (CSSC) to spread awareness about services like Physiotherapy, Companionship and Counselling. Attendance: 20 health workers (CSSC)
- On 14th August, Thursday - a Technology Training Session on Basics of YouTube was also held, teaching seniors how to log in, search videos, and use YouTube safely for entertainment and learning. Attendance: 17
- On 22nd August, Friday - In collaboration with Nana Nani Khushiyaan & Jaslok Hospital, a health awareness session on Acidity & Reflux was conducted by Dr. Manek Kuttar. This was followed with a talk by Dietician Ms. Jyoti Bhatt. Seniors appreciated learning practical tips and healthy eating habits to prevent acidity and maintain good digestive health. Attendance: 48
- On 25th August, Monday - An Online Legal Aid Session on the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act was conducted by Adv. Sayali Vani (NGO, Dard Se Humdard Tak). The session provided seniors with legal awareness about their rights and available remedies. Attendance: 17

• GUEST LECTURE

On 29th August, Friday - A Guest Lecture by Dr. Gajendra P. Silimkar on Easing Knee Pain: Strategies for Recovery & Long-Term Wellness was organized. The session explained common causes of knee pain in old age and offered both preventive and recovery-based strategies such as posture correction, gentle exercises, weight management, and lifestyle adjustments. Seniors found the session highly relevant, as it addressed their day-to-day mobility challenges. Many participants shared that the information would help them reduce discomfort and improve movement. A Q/A session at the end allowed them to clarify personal concerns, making it very impactful. Attendance: 31

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AGEING WITH DIGNITY AND GRACE

Tulsi Trust was established by the Chanrai family in 1975 with an aim to fulfil basic needs of the poor and needy. At a deeper level, it's more than indulging in physical activities. Health care, skills development and education are top priorities. It envisages a fair world for all, working with partners to improve health care and opportunities for livelihood, & education. Add to this, the capacity to understand another's needs and do this with utmost integrity.

Graceful Living (GL) is an arm of Tulsi Trust which came out of a realization of a social need for elderly care. After three active years, GL is now a recognized organization for those in their twilight years and has created an awareness through its activities and talks for senior citizens. GL has a social presence viz. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.

SERVICES PROVIDED BY GRACEFUL LIVING

COUNSELLING & MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- Mpower
- Dr. Mamta Kakade
- Echoing Healthy Ageing

COMPANIONSHIP SERVICES

- MayaCare Foundation

PHYSIOTHERAPY

- Praj- The Rehab Centre
- Dr. Pooja Gindra
- Dr. Alfiya Shaikh

TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

- Simpli5 - Mr. Salil Datar
- Mrs. Mansi Golwalkar
- Ms. Sakshi Kadam

ELDER COMPANIONSHIP COURSE AT MMP SHAH COLLEGE

YOUTH SENSITIZATION PROGRAMS & INTER-GENERATIONAL ACTIVITIES.

SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

- Conducted by Senior Citizens' Volunteers trained by Graceful Living

DIRECT INTERVENTION BY GL...

- Webinars – alternate month
- Guest Lectures by professionals/experts – mainly on Zoom
- Graceful Living Monthly Newsletter carrying important information for the elderly plus articles by known doctors and other professionals
- Co-ordination by GL to create platforms for senior citizen organizations in the city



112-A Mittal Towers, Nariman Point, Mumbai – 400 021. Tel.

+91 22842006 | info@tulsitrust.org | www.tulsitrust.org

info@gracefulliving.co.in | www.gracefulliving.co.in

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FEW EASY QUIZ QUESTIONS:

1. If someone is descending are they going up or down?
Down.
2. What is the Italian word for pie?
Pizza.
3. By what title is the Bishop of Rome known as?
The Pope.
4. Who wrote the Wind in the Willows?
Kenneth Grahame.
5. What does a Frogman wear on his feet?
Flippers.
6. What is the name of the largest castle in the capital of Scotland?
Edinburgh Castle.
7. What is the name of the sweet liquid collected by Bees?
Nectar.
8. What 3-letter word is the name of a fox's home?
Den.
9. Do Reptiles have cold or warm blood?
Cold.
10. What sea creature has 3 hearts and 8 arms?
An Octopus.

VIEWPOINT

The festive month of the year, October is here. It is that time of the year with Navratras, Dassera, Diwali, Bhai Bhuj. Oh, so much celebration. We give you a special issue starting with the woes of ACIDITY. This has become a major problem among the young and old alike. You take ant-acid pills which help in digestion but they do come with a hidden cost...your health. Taking them over a long period can cause several health issues. YOU HAVE TO GIVE YOUR BODY A BREAK.

Let your mind not hinder learning as you age, says Ms. Amruta Lovekar. It is the mindset which can keep you going. A Japanese writer & psychiatrist, Dr. Wada, mentions that 'Ageing is not a decline, but a vibrancy of life' in his book, the '80-Year-Old Wall' which provides practical advice on mental and physical well-being for seniors and has become a best-seller of sorts. STOP LEARNING AND YOU WILL GET OLD.

We present excerpts from the article by Jaya Prasad Tripathy (Ref. NIH - National Library of Medicine), called 'Geriatric Care in India: A Long Way to Go'. We have listed Graceful Living's recent events which include a Guest Lecture by Dr. Gajendra P. Silimkar on Easing Knee Pain: Strategies for Recovery. The response to the talk was tremendous as it is a burning issue in old age. Our last page has a Quiz for you. Easy-to-answer. Please don't look at the answers first.

And more: Just a warning from personal experience: Please do go slow on popping pills as even pain killers are said to be causing kidney dysfunction. But any medication, even a paracetamol under the guidance of a doctor is recommended.

Asha Gurnani Vohra
Editor

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